

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5955

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26669

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TH

SUBJECT: PATTANI PROTEST

REF: (A) SONGKHLA 221; (B) SONGKHLA 223; (C) BANGKOK 26562

SUMMARY. DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE IN PATTANI. WHILE PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT IS STILL RESISTING DEMANDS HE VISIT SOUTH AND MEET WITH DEMONSTRATORS, PRESSURE IS MOUNTING FOR HIM TO DO SO. LIKELY THAT WITHOUT SUCH AN INITIATIVE, PRESENT STALEMATE WILL CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

1. AMCONSUL REPORTS FROM SONGKHLA DECEMBER 22 THAT SEVERAL THOUSAND MUSLIM DEMONSTRATORS IN PATTANI ARE HOLDING TO THEIR DEMAND THAT PM KHUKRIT PRAMOT TALK TO THEM PERSONALLY TO REACH A SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT TROUBLES IN SOUTH THAILAND. THAI NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT KHUKRIT WAS BURNED IN EFFIGY ON DECEMBER 22 WHEN HE FAILED TO TURN UP TO MEET MUSLIMS. DESPITE THREATS OF VIOLENCE, HOWEVER, NONE HAS OCCURRED.

2. PRESSURE IS MOUNTING FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS FOR KHUKRIT TO GO TO PATTANI. WHILE CONTINUING TO RESIST SUCH PRESSURE, KHUKRIT MAY EVENTUALLY HAVE TO GIVE IN. BANGKOK POST OF DECEMBER 23 REPORTED THAT KHUKRIT FELT THAT HE SHOULD NOT GO BECAUSE, IF HE DID, IT WOULD SET AN UNHEALTHY PRECEDENT WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO AVOID FOLLOWING IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID HE WAS AFRAID HE WOULD

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BE FORCED TO GO TO OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY TO MEET OTHER

DEMONSTRATORS SUPPORTING OTHER CAUSES AND COULD NOT PER-
FOR MORE VITAL TASKS. BUT HE ADDED "I CANNOT MAKE THE
DECISION MYSELF. I HAVE TO LISTEN TO THE CABINET'S
OPINION. IF THEY SAY I SHOULD GO, THEN I GO."

3. COMMENT: IF KHUKRIT CONTINUES TO RESIST THESE
PRESSURES, THE PRESENT STALEMATE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE.
PROTESTORS KNOW THAT THEY HAVE A GOOD CASE, AND THAT THE RTG
WILL BE VERY RELUCTANT TO INFLAME PASSIONS FURTHER BY
FORCIBLY BREAKING UP THE DEMONSTRATIONS.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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